

PEBA Knowledge Management System

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South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority

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Introduction

The South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority (PEBA), was created July 1, 2012 to manage the insurance and retirement programs for South Carolina's public workforce. The retirement component previously operated under the South Carolina Retirement Systems (SCRS) and the insurance component operated under the Employee Insurance Program. Both components were formerly part of the SC Budget and Control Board. Today, PEBA is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors who supervise and direct the agency's functions. PEBA manages retirement plans for nearly 549,000 members and offers insurance products and programs to over 436,000 people including spouses and children.

PEBA mission

PEBA's mission is to provide competitive retirement and insurance benefit programs for South Carolina public employers, employees and retirees.

PEBA goals

Our goals are to improve internal efficiencies through new system implementation and enhance the customer experience for members and employers, and maintain a workforce and work environment conducive to the achievement of agency goals and objectives.

Like many organizations, PEBA is faced with staffing challenges brought on by loss of staff due to retirement and new skills requirements due to advances in technology. We respect the individual contributions of each employee and endeavor to empower employees with the needed resources for teamwork, shared pride and continuous learning.

Problem statement

The information we rely on to make decisions, perform job tasks, and assist members is stored in many different places including various websites, plan documents, publications, interdepartmental work manuals (which may or may not be up to date), employees' personal workstations, the memory of long-term employees, and more. To access information efficiently, we need to consolidate and maintain the information we rely on.

Background information

A fiduciary audit conducted in 2014 reported "The administrative processes used by PEBA to deliver services to members appear to function well and consistently. However, many processes are not well documented and rely extensively on the knowledge of long-time employees. As up to 45% of employees are eligible for retirement within five years, this retirement cliff presents significant risk."

Per audit recommendations PEBA is in the process of updating our information systems which required each department to document its processes. To improve our internal administrative processes used to deliver services to members, PEBA would like to use a knowledge management system to centralize and store the vast amount of information we are responsible for tracking. For my project I chose to research different knowledge management systems (KMS) available to see if there is a software program available that meets PEBA's specific needs and recommend an implementation plan.

Techopedia defines a knowledge management as a system for applying and using knowledge management principles. These include data-driven objectives around business productivity, a competitive business model, business intelligence analysis and more.

A knowledge management system is made up of different software modules served by a central user interface. Some of these features can allow data mining on customer input and histories, along with the provision or sharing of electronic documents.

Benefits of a KMS

A knowledge management system offers the following benefits:

More knowledgeable workforce: A KMS can give employees easy access to the information necessary to perform various job duties, assist members, respond to inquiries and resolve issues efficiently, and is a way to share institutional knowledge with new and existing employees.

Source documentation and document changes: We can document our policies and procedures, and link relevant source documents such as state law, federal law, and contractual terms when appropriate, as well as, document changes to our internal processes.

Continuous process improvement: PEBA is constantly looking for ways to make improvements and streamline processes. A KMS that allows employees to see all the information related to a process or rule will empower employees with the information they need to make informed decisions.

Data collection

My goal was to collect the information necessary to build a KMS. To build a KMS I needed to determine if employees were interested in a KMS and the type of information they needed; compile a list of the laws and regulations that apply to the insurance and retirement programs PEBA administers, and research various KMS software.

Determine internal staff's needs

To determine if internal staff were interested in a knowledge management system, I chose to discuss my CPM project with employees during an internal cross functional team meeting. This is a regularly scheduled meeting that brings employees from different departments; including customer services; employer services; finance; legal; operations; IT; and members of executive management, together to share updates and changes happening within their respective departments. Approximately 30 staff members were present during the meeting. During this meeting I explained the purpose of a knowledge management system and asked the type of information they would like stored.

Compile laws, regulations, and business rules

To build a KMS I compiled a list of state and federal laws that apply to our insurance and retirement programs. To prepare for our new Benefit Administration System, PEBA documented all the business rules required to program our new system. The business rules included the applicable state, federal, and/or operational process associated with each business rule. These rules will establish the foundation necessary to build a KMS.

Identify top 5 insurance and top 5 retirement call reasons in 2019

The top five call reasons will be used to begin building the knowledge management system. I ran call reason statistics reports in Unix, the system PEBA currently uses to administer benefits, to pull the top 5 insurance and the top 5 retirement call reasons for 2019.

The top five insurance call reasons were:

- Eligible Active- This category includes various eligibility questions for active employees.
- Add/Drop- This category includes questions related to adding and dropping dependents from coverage and making changes to insurance coverage.
- Eligible Retiree- This category includes questions related to an employee's eligibility to enroll in insurance once they retire.
- Medicare- Questions related to Medicare are logged under this call reason.
- Health- Questions from members related to health insurance questions are logged under this call reason.

The top five retirement call reasons were:

- Benefits payment- Calls retirement annuity payments are logged under this call reason.
- Claims-refund- Calls related to the status of refunds and questions on how to apply for a refund of retirement contributions are logged under claims refund.
- Claims -death- Calls related to the death of a member are logged under this call reason.

- Consultation S- Calls are logged under this call reason when a member requests a service retirement consultation.
- Membership info- Calls are logged under this call reasons when a caller has questions about which retirement system they can join or if they are eligible to opt out of the retirement system.

Identify potential software

I used the website capterra.com to compare top rated KMS software. When comparing software, it was important to look for a cloud-based solution that allows users the flexibility to create articles that help employees. The software must be searchable, have the capability to house a vast amount of information, and allow users the ability to build a knowledge-based repository. I identified 4 potential software products that could meet our knowledge management system needs based on consumer reviews, Zendesk, Zoho Desk, Confluence, and Evernote Business. I compared the cost, customer rating for ease of use, and product features.

Data analysis

Analysis of staff needs

After speaking with internal staff, I determined there is interest in a knowledge management system. We also realized we need a better way to permanently store historical documents in a central location. A document management system is more beneficial for support staff who do not regularly interact with members. During our discussion many staff members stated they had difficulty locating historical documents that contained information necessary to track trends. Currently our documents are stored in many different places, including our I: drive

(shared computer network), our internal intranet, our digital imaging system, and stored as hard copies in various locations.





A knowledge management system is more beneficial for customer service staff for quick access to answers regarding operational processes and product information when assisting members.

The contact center built a customer service application tool several years ago, that was designed to guide customer service representatives in navigating certain operational processes.




Due to staffing changes the system was not maintained and the platform on which the system was built has become functionally obsolete and is no longer supported by current technology.

Analysis of KMS software

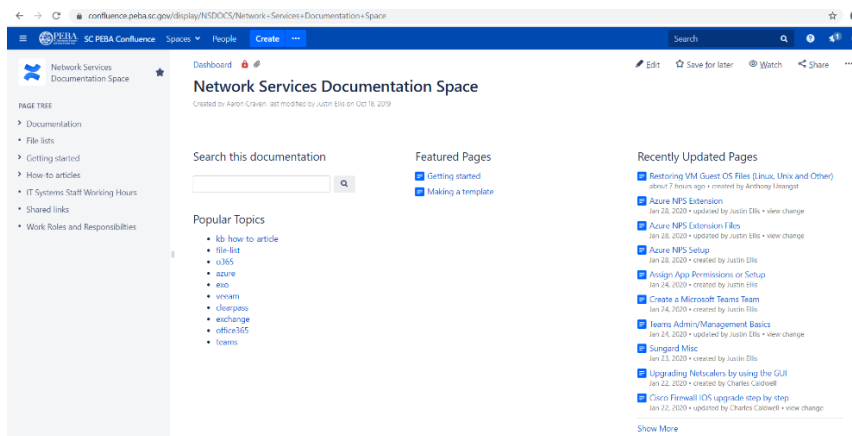
Zendesk, Zoho, and Confluence offered the similar product features and most importantly, a knowledge base management feature. Evernote was removed from the list of possible KMS software because it did not meet PEBA's needs for a KMS. Evernote Business focused more on task management for team projects.

	<div>✕ Remove All Products</div> <div>Share <</div>	<div>✕ Remove</div> <div> Zendesk by Zendesk</div> <div>Visit Website ></div>	<div>✕ Remove</div> <div> Zoho Desk by Zoho Desk</div> <div>Visit Website ></div>	<div>✕ Remove</div> <div> Confluence by Atlassian</div> <div>Visit Website ></div>	<div>✕ Remove</div> <div> Evernote Business by Evernote</div> <div>View Details</div>
Product Features		<div>✓ Cataloging/Categorization</div> <div>✓ Collaboration</div> <div>✓ Content Management</div> <div>✓ Decision Tree</div> <div>✓ Discussion Boards</div> <div>✓ Full Text Search</div> <div>✓ Knowledge Base Management</div> <div>✓ Self Service Portal</div>	<div>✓ Cataloging/Categorization</div> <div>✓ Collaboration</div> <div>✓ Content Management</div> <div>✓ Decision Tree</div> <div>✓ Discussion Boards</div> <div>✓ Full Text Search</div> <div>✓ Knowledge Base Management</div> <div>✓ Self Service Portal</div>	<div>✓ Cataloging/Categorization</div> <div>✓ Collaboration</div> <div>✓ Content Management</div> <div>✗ Decision Tree</div> <div>✓ Discussion Boards</div> <div>✓ Full Text Search</div> <div>✓ Knowledge Base Management</div> <div>✓ Self Service Portal</div>	Not provided by vendor

The cost associated with implementing a KMS is displayed in the image below. Each software program charges a fee per month per user. PEBA employs approximately 260 employees. The cost associated with implementing a KMS software for the entire agency approximately is \$1,300 for Zendesk; \$3,120 for Zoho; \$2,600 for Confluence.

Zendesk vs Zoho Desk vs Confluence			
✕ Remove All Products + Add Product Share <	✕ Remove  Zendesk by Zendesk Visit Website	✕ Remove  Zoho Desk by Zoho Desk Visit Website	✕ Remove  Confluence by Atlassian Visit Website
Starting Price	\$5.00/month/user	\$12.00/month/user	\$10.00/month/user
Best For	From start ups to Fortune 500 companies, over 200,000+ customers trust Zendesk with their customer support needs.	Zoho Desk is most beneficial to customer-focused companies with passionate service teams and a large volume of frequent customer interactions. It scales to any size and fits many verticals.	Today all kinds of functional departments of any size use Confluence, from technical teams and project management groups, to marketing, HR, legal, and finance. All teams get work done with Confluence.
Rating	★★★★★ 4.4 / 5 (2331) Read All Reviews	★★★★★ 4.5 / 5 (1595) Read All Reviews	★★★★★ 4.4 / 5 (1502) Read All Reviews

After reviewing the features and the cost, I met with the Customer Service Manager and PEBA’s Chief Information Officer (CIO) to determine if there was a KMS solutions available. After speaking with our CIO, we determined we have the software necessary to build a knowledge management system and possibly store historical documents. Our IT department already has the software and licensing for Confluence. PEBA’s IT department uses Confluence to document and provide its staff with information needed to resolve internal IT issues. Confluence discounts the price as you add more users, however, there would be no additional cost to PEBA because the agency has already purchased the software.



Analysis of law, regulations, and business rules

During PEBA's operational assessment we documented all our procedures in preparation for a new Benefits Administration System. PEBA document approximately 1259 insurance and retirement business rules for our new system and notated if the rule was a state law, federal law, or internal operational process. One of the benefits of a KMS is the ability to empower employees with the information necessary to make informed decision regarding process improvement. I grouped the business rules into 4 categories based on PEBA's ability to change a rule and determined there are 315 rules within PEBA, area of control; 323 rules are tied to contracts. These are within PEBA control to change however, we would have to wait for the right time to make any changes; 471 rules are in place due to state law so PEBA would have to persuade state law makers if a change is needed; 150 rules are in place due to federal legislation. PEBA can only make changes to accommodate federal legislation.

Implementation Plan

In November 2019, following the internal meeting with internal staff, PEBA began the process of identifying, indexing and consolidating historical documents our imaging system.

Implementing a KMS should be completed within 6-9 months, however, a KMS will be an ongoing process. I recommend the following plan to successfully begin the process of implementing a successful KMS using the Confluence software.

- PEBA should work closely with customer service, and a representative from IT with experience using Confluence to create an index of the articles and the associated publications and forms that should be included with each article, if applicable.
- Once the index of articles has been created, begin the process of designing a basic template and layout for each article to follow and draft a sample article using one of the top 5 insurance or retirement call reasons.
- After the sample article has been approved begin the process of adding more articles associated with the top five insurance and retirement call reasons. These should take priority because employees will have to respond to these types of inquiries frequently.
- Once the top five insurance and retirement articles have been created, transfer the information that is still current from the Customer Service Application Tool to Confluence.
- Continue adding articles until all desired articles are in Confluence. The index created at the beginning of the process should serve as a guide and check list for creating articles and should be updated as necessary.

- Coordinate with executive management to announce launch Confluence to the agency.

Evaluation Method

We will review customer service stats to determine if a KMS improves the overall effectiveness of the service we offer to members. Before Confluence is launched to the call center, we can measure the average call handle time. This is historical data is readily available. Once the KMS has been implemented we can review the customer service statistics monthly to see if 1st call resolution increases. . To determine if the KMS has the information employees need we will request feedback from staff members. A feature will be included that allows employees the ability to request content be added or updated in Confluence.

Summary and recommendations

In summary, PEBA wants to look for ways to empower employees with the information they need to perform their jobs. Employees are interested in a KMS and PEBA has the software necessary to move forward at no additional cost to the agency. After the internal meeting with staff we decided to use our current imaging system to store historical documents. Confluence can also serve as a document management system. We should explore the possibility of using Confluence to store historical documents and publications. Implementing a KMS system using Confluence is a step in the right direction in creating a more knowledgeable workforce.

Resources

- Investing in PEBA for the future: A transformation agenda: Fiduciary performance audit of SC PEBA
https://oig.sc.gov/sites/default/files/Documents/Reports/2015/FAS_Final_PEBA_Fiduciary_Audit_Report_January_2015.pdf
- Knowledge Management Software: <https://www.capterra.com/knowledge-management-software/>

Knowledge Management System:
<https://www.techopedia.com/definition/7962/knowledge-management-system-kms>
- Monte, Jill, The 10-Step Guide to Setting Up a Knowledge Management Program:
<https://www.edsisolutions.com/blog/the-10-step-guide-to-setting-up-a-knowledge-management-program>